

## GUIDANCE ON THE ADDITIONAL PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT FUNDS AVAILABLE TO SCHOOLS IN IMPROVEMENT

May 2015

Schools identified for program improvement have the opportunity to apply for additional program improvement funds. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on these funds.

### ► **Title I Law – 1003a and 1003g Funds**

#### **1003a –**

The *No Child Left Behind* law requires states to withhold up to 4% of their Title I funds off the top of their state allocation for program improvement. These funds are referred to as the 1003a funds. At least 95% of those funds reserved must be allocated to schools identified for program improvement. The remaining 5% may be used at the state level for program improvement activities. There is a clause, however, in the law stating that state departments can only reserve the 4% if we can ensure that no LEA receives less than last year because of the 4% reservation.

#### **1003g –**

Congress has also appropriated a second category of program improvement funds to further provide schools with financial resources to implement program improvement initiatives. States receive these additional program improvement funds as a separate grant. These funds are referred to as the 1003g funds.

### ► **Who May Apply**

#### **Tier I, Tier II, Tier III**

The 1003g funds must first be made available to Tier I and Tier II schools. If funds remain after Tier I and Tier II applicants have been processed, then Tier III schools may apply for funding.

All **schools** in improvement are eligible to apply for the 1003a funds.

### ► **Use of Funds**

Schools must use additional program improvement funds to carry out the program improvement, corrective action, or alternative governance responsibilities as identified in their program improvement plan. For example, schools may use funds to develop and implement program improvement plans, conduct professional development, strengthen curriculum, and enhance parental involvement.

As part of a program improvement plan, schools may also use funds to expand, enhance, or build upon reform strategies already underway. For example, in the case of a school that is implementing school reform strategies during the regular school day using regular Title I or other federal, state, or local funds, additional program improvement funds might be used to implement related extended-time programs such as before- and after-school or summer school programming.

Funds may be used to obtain technical assistance for schools as they develop and implement program improvement plans and, where appropriate, to take corrective action or alternative governance measures. Technical assistance may be provided by an institution of higher education, a private non-profit organization, or other educational service agency.

A school may also use these funds for parent outreach costs and, with some limitations, for transportation costs. In addition, schools and school districts may use program improvement funds to pay for additional supplemental educational services beyond the required set aside amount if the district spent their entire set aside amount on supplemental services.

All staff hired with additional funds for program improvement **must be highly qualified and hold an appropriate credential**, if applicable. Aides/paraprofessionals hired with these funds must hold a North Dakota Title I Paraprofessional Certificate of Completion.

Requests for out-of-state trips and trainings with additional program improvement funding must be limited. Out-of-state trips are very costly and are not considered high quality professional development as defined by the NCLB Act. The *Train the Trainer Model* is encouraged. Only two staff will be allowed to attend the same training. These two staff members then need to return and share the information they received with other staff within the building.

Targeted assistance Title I schools who are identified for improvement are somewhat limited on how the funds can be utilized. Unfortunately, the targeted assistance designation does not go away for program improvement. When a school plans, looks at data, or conducts high quality professional development, all staff in the building identified for improvement can participate. However, any interventions funded can only be for identified at-risk students.

Program improvement funds must be used to supplement the level of funds that, in the absence of the Title I funds would be made available from non-federal sources. For example, if a district is required by state or local law to provide a service to students, it may not use program improvement funds to supplant the state or local funds that it would otherwise use to provide this service.

In summary, please note the following aspects regarding the use of additional program improvement funding:

- Should funding become available for districts, the funds can only be used within Title I buildings.
- Program improvement funds must be used to supplement not supplant services. All activities must be supplemental in terms of greater instructional intensity and opportunity to learn.
- It is important to note that you may only claim the amount of funds that are actually spent and thoroughly documented. Any unused funds will go back into the state pool of funds for future program improvement grant applications.

The above use of funds guidance also pertains to districts should funding be made available.

## ► **Allowable Expenditures**

The federal law does not provide a specific listing of allowable expenditures; however, we have prepared a list outlining the types of expenditures that could be considered depending on the school's situation and program improvement plan/initiatives. The list of allowable expenditures, although not inclusive, is designed to give school personnel an understanding of the types of expenditures that are appropriate with the additional funds.

- Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies.
- Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next, as well as aligned with the state academic standards.
- Fund increased learning time by developing an extended day program (e.g., before-after school program, summer school, lengthen school year, Saturday school).
- Fund additional supports and professional development to teachers and principals in order to implement effective strategies to support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and to ensure that limited English proficient students acquire language skills to master academic content.
- Fund opportunities for students to enroll in advanced coursework, early-college high school courses, dual credit programs, or thematic learning academies that prepare students for college and careers. Providing appropriate supports designed to ensure that low-achieving students can take advantage of these programs and coursework.
- Implement approaches to improve school climate and discipline, such as implementing a system of positive behavioral supports or taking steps to eliminate bullying and student harassment.
- Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so.
- Fund parent involvement initiatives that would include strategies to increase the involvement and contributions, in both school-based and home-based settings, of parents and community partners that are designed to support classroom instruction and increase student achievement.
- Fund training that looks at your school's scores and analyze them to understand why the school is identified for program improvement.
- Hire a consultant to work extensively with the school to pinpoint areas of needs and ways to address those needs.
- Hire instructional coaches to work directly with teachers to increase knowledge of effective teaching strategies.
- Form study groups with the task of learning how to teach struggling students, differentiate instruction, and design an extensive assessment system.
- Provide additional compensation to attract and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of students in a transformation school.

- Fund activities to align curriculum and instruction to the state academic standards.
- Implement an intervention process, such as Response to Intervention, to create a well-integrated system of instruction.
- Hire a graduation coach to ensure all students graduate.
- Pay staff to create an Individual Learning Plan for every at-risk student.
- Invest in diagnostic assessments to pinpoint student's areas of need.
- Expand the school program to offer pre-kindergarten.
- Hire an attendance officer to increase attendance.

Please ensure all activities and expenditures are coded correctly by using the chart below to help determine the appropriate object code.

Object/ID Code	Example	Object/ID Code	Example
110	Professional salaries – salaries paid to certified individuals; includes substitute teacher salary.	580	Travel – Expenditures for staff travel, including mileage, airline tickets, taxi fares, meals, lodging
120	Non-professional salaries – salaries paid to other staff that are not certificated; i.e., paraprofessionals, secretaries, teachers' aides, bus drivers	600	Materials/Supplies – Expendable items that are consumed, worn out, or deteriorated in use; includes equipment that costs less than \$750, freight, books, school supplies, and periodicals
200	Employee benefits – payments that are not part of gross salary made on behalf of employee; i.e., insurance, Social Security, retirement, unemployment compensation, Workers Compensation, annual leave, sick leave	730	Equipment – Includes equipment that costs more than \$750 per item and computers, regardless of the cost (iPads, iPods, computers, cameras, scanners, etc.)
300	Contracted services – purchased services for which the district has a contract on file (includes speaker fees and professional development on site)	800	Dues, Memberships, Registration Fees, Subscription Fees, License Fees
430	Maintenance – repair of equipment	900	Indirect Costs

#### ► **Non-allowable Use of Funds**

- Hiring long term staff. (It should be stated in the executed contract that funding is only for the 2015-2016 school year.)
- Purchasing computer equipment.
- The program improvement funds are directly linked to the subjects of reading and math, and should focus on helping schools and district make AYP.
- Purchasing excessive supplies and materials. These expenditures will only be considered if they are necessary to implement the application plan.
- Applications consisting solely of activities that do not meet the federal definition of high quality professional development.
- Stipends for staff to write grants for additional competitive funds (i.e., subsequent year SIG competition).
- Hiring staff that would be supplanting the requirements in state law.

## ► **Budget Revisions**

Please note the following details regarding submitting budget revisions for additional program improvement funding:

- If you make any changes to your original application, you must complete a budget revision. Any changes made to your application that are not approved through the budget revision process may be disallowed at the end of the grant period.
- Any budget revisions to the approved application must be requested and approved by the ND DPI **before** the revisions are made. The budget revision form (SFN 9035) can be accessed at [www.nd.gov/dpi/forms/](http://www.nd.gov/dpi/forms/).
- If a district is submitting a budget revision to use funds not spent because an activity did not occur, then the budget request must be for a **new** activity that will occur after the budget revision has been approved. It is not acceptable to simply move funds from one grant to another to use up funding.
- Activities requested within a budget revision must be supported by the data and goals requested in the original plan.

## ► **How to Request Payment**

Program improvement funds are paid out on a reimbursement basis. Districts should submit a Request for Funds (SFN 14660) form when activities are complete.

Any revisions made to your program improvement application need to be submitted and approved on a Budget Revision (SFN 9035) form prior to making the expenditure.

It is important to note that you may only claim the amount of funds that are actually spent. In addition, the reimbursable activity must be part of your approved application and the expenses must be evidenced with supporting documentation. Any unused funds will go back into the state pool of funds for future program improvement grant applications. Therefore, if you need to make changes to your budget, it is imperative that you do a budget revision prior to making the expenditure.

Copies of the Request for Funds form and Budget Revision form can be accessed at [www.nd.gov/dpi/forms/](http://www.nd.gov/dpi/forms/).

## ► **Reporting**

These funds must be tracked separately and detailed expenditure records must be kept for the quarterly reports and final reports due at the close of the fiscal year.

Each school that receives additional program improvement funds will be required to submit a final Request for Funds (SFN 14660) form and a ledger in order to receive final payment and close out the grant.

If you have any questions regarding the information contained in this guidance, please contact Laurie Matzke at [lmatzke@nd.gov](mailto:lmatzke@nd.gov) or (701) 328-2284 or Lauri Nord at [lnord@nd.gov](mailto:lnord@nd.gov) or (701) 328-2282.